

I find the protest by Smart Cars to be a conflict of interest based on the fact that their parent company Daimler-Benz is attempting to import these cars themselves. Mercedes-Benz North American (here forth referred to as MBNA) has had considerable sway in the US policy concerning an individuals ability to import a car of their choice. MBNA was one of the chief complainants that led to the elimination of the "one-time import" of non-conforming vehicle. To let a foreign-owned company shape the freedom of choice of US Citizens is unjust. The import and modification business was a thriving example of how small business works in the United States. This industry provided jobs to thousands of people and led to the development of new technology that improved safety and environmental conditions. I find it deplorable that the change in policy served to "protect" the profit of a foreign corporation over the rights of the small-businessperson in the United States.

It is logical to assume that the Daimler-Benz Smart Car division understands that these vehicles are capable of passing and/or being modified to meet standards, since they are in fact attempting the same objective. It would be a fallacy to assume that the manufacture "knows best". We have entire industries based in the United States that improve upon the design and manufacture of products that are produced by the original manufacturer. As with any product that is produced over time, improvements to the overall designed are realized as we experience the use and observation of these products in a real-world environment. Size and mass production do not guarantee that a product will be superior than that of a small volume manufacturer. Technologies required to meet US specifications exist to manufacturers regardless of size. Materials such as plastic, steel, and foam are not exotic materials that only can be afforded by large manufacturers. They are products that are economical and can be purchased at the same quality levels and standards as by the major manufacturers. One does not have to look very far to see that the major innovations in this nation were developed by small companies who grew large because of their innovations. Should we have prevented Dell Computer from selling their products because they were founded in a college dorm room? The US automotive industry was founded by people experimenting in their workshops and garages. Today we have similar individuals, however the availability of technology and resources allows them access to innovate at a level enjoyed by large manufactures.

Based on the availability of the same or comparable materials, products, and technologies to the small- volume importer or manufacturer I request that the petition to import vehicles be granted to the Smart Micro Car company.